

## **Running**

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When I think of Forrest Gump, there are two things that come to my mind: “Life is like a box of chocolates,” and running. In fact, at one point in the movie, Forrest says that from that point forward, whenever he went anywhere, “I was running!” Throughout the movie, much attention was given to his running. Many of us can hear in our memories, the plea, “Run, Forrest! Run!”

I don’t particularly enjoy running. I do it because the military requires me to do it at least twice a year. It is done as a part of my semi-annual proof that I maintain a level of physical fitness and readiness.

While I don’t enjoy running, I admire those who do. Even more, I admire those who don’t enjoy it, but do it beyond the limits of requirement. A good friend of mine, Lieutenant Steven Bowser, is one of those people. Last year, he won the half-marathon on base, and then ran the Boston Marathon – again. In fact, Steven has run the Boston Marathon several times, as well as other marathons.

I have learned by watching Steven, and through my own meager experiences, that you can’t simply go out and run the marathon. You must train for it first. It involves a long period of pushing your body to new levels of endurance. You gradually increase your distance, while hopefully decreasing your time. Anyone who simply goes out and tries to run such a distance without preparing for it first is foolish.

Another thing worth noting is that the point of satisfaction comes, not in the training, not in the running, but in the completion. Steve has told me that it is a great feeling of exhilaration when you cross the finish line. I suppose that it is the finish that makes all of the work and effort worthwhile.

Paul talked about this in one of his letters. He knew that he was near the end of his life. Soon he would be put to death by the Romans. He had already been cast out of the Jewish community. He had been stoned and left for dead. He had been persecuted and beaten. He had been called a heretic and ridiculed. Now, as he approached the end of his life, he was able to say with firm conviction that it had all been worth it.

In fact, he told his young protégé in the ministry, Timothy, that, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2 Tim. 4:7-8) Paul knew that all that he had suffered and endured was going to be worth it. He was able to approach the finish line with confidence because he knew that what awaited him on the other side was reward, rest and refreshment, and the overwhelming approval of a Heavenly Father who was proud of him.

Train to live your life so that when you reach the end of it, you do so with confidence and satisfaction, ready to hear the Righteous Judge say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in Church on Sunday.